

Letter

A scrap of paper

wants to commit suicide

L.K., Erving Gen ~~Erving Gen~~ ~~Erving Gen~~.

Early dawn. A scrap of paper flutters along a wall.

It flutters, ^{falls} ~~drops~~ to the

ground, ~~gets up, pauses,~~

~~Tumbles over~~ from the sidewalk to the pavement,

~~slides~~ along, stands up

~~again~~, and is back at the wall, ambling and aimlessly

groping.

Is it sick? Is it starved?

~~or is it just a plain drunkard~~

Who knows and ~~what's more~~
 Who cares?

It is just a scrap of paper
~~alone in the deserted street.~~

It follows the wind -

this way... that way -

What difference does it make?

Finally ~~it~~ ^{the scrap of} the piece of paper
 strikes a lamp-post
~~and trembling all over~~ bursts
 out crying:

Oh god almighty, how deep
 have I sunk!
 How low have I fallen!

Last night in the rain

I saw my image in the gutter

Woe to my face... What I look like!

wrinkled and dirty

My clothes in tatters
~~and~~ ^c soaked in mud.

Oh god in heaven why have
 you done this to me!

^{I know, I know}
 Yes, Yes Life is like a dream
 like a dream.

It is, as if it were but yesterday
 she - that lovely, beautiful lady
 took me out of my cozy,
 perfumed drawer, where I
 lay happy and contented in

my ~~case~~ cellophane wrapper
 with a pink silken ribbon
 tied around my middle.

she stretched me out on
 the shiny surface of her
 dainty desk. And putting
 her ~~tippling~~, ^{etc} fragrant fingers
 on my delicate glossy skin and
 looking ~~me~~ straight into ^{my} ~~the~~ eyes.
 She entrusted me with her
 innermost, holiest secret.

Stroking and caressing me with
 her golden pen she ^{ee} pieced
 together her broken heart
 and poured ~~a~~ out her consuming
 love ... No, No, Not for me, but
 for that dear, sweet, handsome
 and beloved scoundrel.

And I - not a word did I say. For when I looked up into her eyes, I saw in them tears glittering like diamonds, reflecting all the hues of the rainbow.

My ^{AW}tongue became tied with the wonder of it all and I kept silent.

But deep down in my heart.

I ~~was~~ understood and knew:

~~what she expected me to do
for her. I knew she was~~

sending me to work a miracle,
to strike a rock ~~in the wilderness~~,
to pierce her lovers heart and
draw pity from it, like
Moses drew water from the
rock in the desert.

I looked up to her wondering
Why? why have you chosen
me for this errand?

I am too delicate to puny,
too indolent for the task.

Why don't you use ~~a club~~,
 a stick, a broom ~~or even~~
~~a club~~ ~~to~~ knock some
 sense into his head?

But how could I have said
No to her, to her who placed
 in my lap her aching, hoping
 dreaming heart, under which
 by the way, she felt the beat
 of a new life. So-o-o

~~Now~~, how could I refuse
 to help, when her tears like
 gentle rain dropped on my
 head, smudged my face and
 her voice pleaded softly:

Please
 save me, save me brother,
 or else I shall die by
 poison.

Now hearing such talk, what
 else could I do but to keep
 my mouth shut, ^{just} lie quietly
 on the table and let her
 do with me whatever she
 may like, or want.

And so after she wiped the
 tears from her eyes, she
 enveloped me in a spick-and-
 span, beautifully starched
 shirt, attached a little
 square green flower on

the upper right-hand

corner of my shirt, kissed me on my head from side to side with her moist lips, this way and that way, and pating me lovingly on my back to encourage me go, go, go. She sent me off on my mission.

I don't recall whether I traveled by plane, train or ship. The place was

jammed. New passengers kept piling up, squeezing and crowding me. Each had

a story to tell, news to
 relate, ~~a~~ some gossip to
 infer, a business deal to
 clinch, ^{No.} No such things with me,
 I didn't listen, nor cared for
^{anybody} I made no friends and kept
to myself, for I had a secret
 to guard, a painful confession
 of an anguished heart, known
 only to God, to her and of
 course to that dear, sweet,
 handsome and beloved scoundrel.
 And so next morning when I
 arrived to that scoundrel, I
 quietly crawled in through

a crack under the door
 of his room and lay on the
 floor ~~and waited~~, waiting
 for him to pick me up tenderly,
 embrace me joyfully and
 kiss me with ecstasy. But
~~it was not to be~~ something
 else happened instead.

As soon as I heard the
 swish-swish of his footsteps
 I edged forward and beckoned
 to him. Hey fellow greetings!
 Congratulations brother! you
 are going to be a father soon.
 There was a deadly silence.

But after a moment of freezing
suspence he bent down,
grabbed me roughly and
thrusting his course finger
under my collar, and with one
stroke he ripped off my
perfumed shirt and glaring
with a mocking, ^{his} vicious
smile at my naked body,
he nervously lit a cigarette
and began to blow the smoke
right into my face.

I clung to his fingers with
all my courage and determination
peered straight forward into

his eyes and stealthily
 rustled the words she had
 inscribed on me.

I reminded him the day he
 danced with her: one step
 forward two steps back, then
 bending ^{her} to the right whisperd
 into ^{left} her ear: comparing her
 first to a star in heaven,
 then to the sun, to the moon
 to a tree, a flower -
 drawing her ever closer,

closer to the ~~wedding~~
 earth, to ^{the} brush, to the
 grass

I waited, as she had ^{me} instructed
 for his heart to begin beating
 faster and for drops of
 silver dew to glisten in his eyes.
 But Bah - there were no drops,
 no silver and no dew in his
 eyes. On the contrary...

Suddenly he was seized by
 a wild rage. His fingers closed
 on me ~~in a~~ steel ~~trap~~.
 He ~~began to~~ ^{to} ~~crumple~~ crumple,
 crush and tear me. I tried
 to cry out the ~~dreaded~~ word:
 poison, poison, but the poison
 remained ^u stuck in my

crumpled throat and I

fainted. ~~What else could I do?~~
~~I couldn't help myself and~~

So when I came to, I found myself on a ^{ee} heap of garbage in a dark hole in the ground.

My clothes were torn.

My bones shattered.

My heart a wreck.

Oh help me! help me ~~please!~~

I moaned and groaned to the ^{uu} rushing feet over my zancid, resting hole.

But who ever heard of feet having ears? or eyes? or mercy? They keep on

marching ~~in a senseless~~
~~square~~ back and forth,
 trampling on heads, hearts
 and very lives in their path.

In my utter despair I
 naturally turned to God.

Oh God, I seriously began to
 pray: ^{Please} take me out of
 here: don't let ^{me} be buried
 alive. You know how

innocently. I was pushed in
 between sin and crime.

~~Who~~ ^{Who} knows, ^{more} but you, that

I was just an innocent
 messenger between a foolish

Maiden and a handsome
scoundrel. Do I deserve
such a brutal fate? But

as they say: God's all over
^{here and there} and everywhere, but when
you need him he's ^{always} somewhere
else. And then how long
and how loud must one
call out for help to God
before he hears your cry?

and
Who's got the strength to
cry so loud and so long.

But God or no God, there's
nothing left in the agony
of fear and

and

so when I slowly realized that I was done and finished, I curled up in a corner and began to say my last prayer. God or no God ^{but as strange as it may sound,} there is nothing left but prayer in the agony of fear and despair. And if ~~somebody~~ somebody tells you otherwise, you better listen to me!

It was just at that very moment, believe it or not, a rickety ^wwind breezed by ~~the my place~~ the garbage hole and overheard my prayer.

The wind whirled around,
swooped down, ^xlifted me
up, pulled me along,
carried me away, and it has
been carrying me ever since
night and day.

Oh brother Wind I know, I
know how sized you must
have grown of me, how
lager you must be, to get
rid of me. Last night
you threw me into a ditch
and when I began to cry
bitterly you picked me up
again. Then in the morning

in a pouring rain you
 pushed me into the gutter
 and when I started to drown →
~~and turned black and blue,~~
 once more you fished me out
~~at the nick of time.~~ Why?
 What for? Let me go, I'm sick
 I tell you. ~~I'm sick.~~

I'm sick ~~of you~~ of myself
 and ^{whole damn wretched} the world. I am tired.
 and can no longer drag my
 weary bones along with you.
 Help me end it all. Put
 me out of my misery.
 Let me die. Kill me, Kill me,

If you haven't got the
 nerve to do it, then carry
 me, as a last favor, out
 of town, put me on the
 rail-road tracks and let
 the first oncoming train crush
 me to death, grind me to
 dust. Give me death. Let
 me rest. Peace, Eternal peace.
 Suddenly the scrap of paper
 tears itself loose from the
 lamppost and staggering
 in a daze, and ^{reeling} like
 a drunk it makes for the
 rail-road. But his friend,

the wind catches up with him, and tries to hold him back.

- "Out of my way" the paper screams.

- "Don't be a fool" howls the wind. They jump on each other. They lock in a bitter fight. ~~They wrestle~~.

The wind is on top of the paper. The paper is on top of the wind. The wind knocks him down with a straight blow. The paper flips, ~~summesults~~, kicks the wind

in the belly, breaks
 away and races breathlessly
 out, ^{out} out of town, and
 reaching the traces, puts
 its head on the ^{the} shirring
 rail and ^{the} shivering ~~potently~~

Whimpers: yes, yes, here

I stay, That's the end,

The final end.

But no sooner does the
rumbling, whistling, rattling
 train begin to shake the

rails throwing its first
^{an} blinding ^{an} glare from its

monstrous eye, than the

miserable scrap of paper
cries out in panic:

Help, -help, he-help stop the
train. Save me, Save me!

In a split second the wind
hurls itself under the wheels,
grabs the paper, ~~by the head~~,
punches the train on the
nose, in the eye; and dragging
along the paper they leap
upon the roof and hit the
smoke-stack. The angry
smoke-stack ~~with~~ tries
~~travelling~~ ~~back~~ flings to spit
~~down~~ them-of the roof,

cursing hell upon their
 heads: "Without tickets ~~you~~
 you ~~damn~~ damn damn damn ~~damn~~
 get of the train ~~you~~
^{freely} you tramps. But the
 wind presses ~~fast~~ the
 exhausted little scrap of
 paper tightly to the smoke-
 stack. ~~It~~ ~~stretches~~ ~~itself~~ ~~in~~ ~~a~~
^{big} long, ~~dark~~ ribbon and
 whirls itself round and
 round them and keeps his
 little ^{paper} friend warm, keeps it
^{warm} keeps it
 going, keeps it safe. But
 the exasperated smoke-stack
 with a powerful ^{ou} growling
belch

~~Belah~~ flings them of the
~~roof of the rushing train,~~
 and blowing with its
 mighty lungs throws them up
 up, high up in the air ~~with~~
 Pt. .. Pt. Pt. ~~up, up up~~
 up, up up

And when the train ^{is} ~~had~~ gone
 the miserable scrap of
 paper stil trembling in ^{the} ~~the~~
 tender arms of the Wind
 Whispers:

— " Oh dear, dear brother Wind
 Bless you for saving my
 life. ~~May you live to~~
~~a hundred and twenty.~~

No one can relish life
 more than the one who
 was on the verge of losing
 it. ^{yes, yes} ~~almost lost my life.~~

I saw death with my own
 eyes, and believe me:

The worst life is vastly better
 than the best death. So

take me, brother Wind, and
 carry me wherever you ^{may} like:

Here today - there tomorrow.

Drag me down, raise me up
 twist me, twine and twizle.

fool me, cheat me and
 delude, but let me live.

That's all I want: to live,
to live.

And so arm in arm, the
Wind and the ^{piece of} paper go of in
^{at} a spiralling jig over the
~~steep~~ fields and meadows
and across the rooftops
where in dancing and
prancing, they greet the
Sunrise over the ^c ^{ce} sleeping
~~city~~ town.